

Message Text

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72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /097 W

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R 151843Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7467

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 1218

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: DO PINT

SUBJ: DOMINICA PREMIER RESIGNS AS PARTY LEADER

REF: BTN A-63

1. AT CONCLUSION OF DOMINICA LABOR PARTY (DLP) ANNUAL CONVENTION JULY 14, PREMIER EDWARD LEBLANC, WHO HAS LED PARTY THROUGH THREE ELECTION VICTORIES, ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION AS DLP POLITICAL LEADER. ANNOUNCEMENT CONFIRMS PRESS REPORTS THAT LEBLANC HAD PRIVATELY INFORMED PARTY LEADERS ON JULY 10 OF HIS INTENTION TO RESIGN AND ALSO CONFIRMS STATEMENTS BY CABINET OFFICIALS LAST NOVEMBER THAT LEBLANC WAS CONSIDERING RETIREMENT FROM ACTIVE POLITICS. DECISION WOULD APPEAR TO TAKE LEBLANC OUT OF RUNNING IN NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, WHICH MUST BE HELD BY SEPT 1975.

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS, LEBLANC ANNOUNCED DECISION IN SPEECH TO DLP CONVENTION DELEGATES WHICH BITTERLY CRITICIZED DOMINICA POLITICS FOR BEING FILLED WITH TREACHERY AND DECEIT. HE BLAMED MUCH OF THE CRITICISM OF HIS GOVERNMENT ON FACT THAT OVER PAST FOURTEEN YEARS DLP HAD ATTEMPTED, WITH SOME SUCCESS, TO BREAK DOWN RACIAL, RELIGIOUS AND CLASS BARRIERS INHERITED FROM PAST, AND WARNED HIS SUCCESSOR AND OTHERS CONSIDERING POLITICAL CAREERS THAT THEY WOULD RECEIVE LITTLE GRATITUDE FOR THEIR EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC. BEFORE LEAVING

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CONVENTION LEBLANC REPORTEDLY TURNED OVER COMPLETE DOSSIER

OF HIS PERSONAL FINANCES. HE SAID HE MIGHT CONSIDER RETURNING TO ACTIVE POLITICS AFTER FIVE YEARS IF CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANTED.

3. BY VOTE OF FOURTEEN-TO-FOUR, DLP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTED DEPUTY PREMIER PATRICK JOHN TO SUCCEED LEBLANC AS POLITICAL LEADER. JOHN, STILL IN HIS TWENTIES, DEFEATED THIRTY-FOUR YEAR OLD RONALD ARMOUR, WHO RESIGNED AS DEPUTY PREMIER LAST AUGUST DURING GOVERNMENT CONFRONTATION WITH CIVIL SERVICE ASSOCIATION. JOHN PLEDGED TO CONTINUE DLP'S SOCIALIST POLICIES AND INDICATED HE WOULD RELY HEAVILY ON LEBLANC'S EXPERIENCE AND ADVICE. IGNORING LEBLANC'S PLEA FOR PARTY UNITY BEHIND NEW LEADER, ARMOUR REPORTEDLY ANNOUNCED SHORTLY AFTER CONVENTION CLOSED THAT HE WOULD FORM NEW THIRD PARTY TO CONTEST NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, PRESS COMMENTS, PARTY LEADERS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, POLITICAL LEADERS, MEETINGS, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BRIDGE01218
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740189-0616
From: BRIDGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740750/aaaabqjm.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BTN A-63
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 OCT 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 OCT 2002 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <16 JAN 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DOMINICA PREMIER RESIGNS AS PARTY LEADER
TAGS: PINT, DO, DLP, DOMINICA LABOR PARTY, (LEBLANC, EDWARD), (JOHN, PATRICK)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005